image

SPAWN'S NEW UNIVERSE

RAT CITY®

VOLUME 1

ERICA SCHULTZ • ZÉ CARLOS • JAY DAVID RAMOS

RAT CITY®

VOLUME 1

ERICA SCHULTZ
ZÉ CARLOS
JAY DAVID RAMOS

RAT CITY®

VOLUME 1

ERICA SCHULTZ
SCRIPT/PLOT

ZÉ CARLOS
ART

JAY DAVID RAMOS
COLOR

ERICA SCHULTZ
LETTERING

TODD MCFARLANE	CREATIVE DIRECTOR
THOMAS HEALY	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
YVETTE ARTEAGA	PUBLISHING COORDINATOR
RYAN KEIZER	PRODUCTION ARTIST
ZABRIEL KENNEDY	PRODUCTION ARTIST
IMANI DAVIS	PRODUCTION ARTIST
SHANNON BAILEY	PRESIDENT OF COMICS OPERATIONS
ERIC STEPHENSON	PUBLISHER FOR IMAGE COMICS

SPAWN CREATED BY TODD MCFARLANE

Spawn: Rat City Volume 1. April 2025. Digital Edition. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293 USA. Originally published in single issue format as *Spawn: Rat City* issues #1-6. Spawn, its logo and its symbol are registered trademarks © 2025 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All other related characters are TM and © 2025 Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. The characters, events and stories in this publication are entirely fictional. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc., or Image Comics, Inc.

image
TODD McFARLANE PRODUCTIONS
McFARLANE.COM

SPAWN'S NEW UNIVERSE

FCO PLASCENCIA
MARCELLO IOZZOLI
IVAN NUNES
ADDITIONAL COLOR

ZÉ CARLOS
KEVIN KEANE
BJÖRN BARENDS
MARK SPEARS
FEDE MELE
DON AGUILLO
THADDEUS ROBECK
COVER ART

ZÉ CARLOS
COLLECTED EDITION COVER

RAT CITY #1

COVER BY ZÉ CARLOS

JUST OUTSIDE ALAT, AZERBAIJAN
2107

THE MEDIA CALLED IT "*THE CONFLICT IN THE CAUCUSES.*"

THAT'S BECAUSE NO ONE WANTED TO SAY WHAT IT *REALLY* WAS.

WORLD WAR 3.

THE *UNITED COALITION OF NATIONS* HAD SEVERAL ELITE SQUADS ON THEIR PAYROLL...

...MILITARY ASSETS *THE INNER CIRCLE* KEPT *OFF THE BOOKS.*

THE RANK AND FILE HAD *NO IDEA* THE CARNAGE THEY WERE RUBBER-STAMPING.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, THESE KILL SQUADS WEREN'T *SAINTS.*

KLK

BUT SOME OF THEM STILL HAD A *CONSCIENCE.*

AT LEAST *PETER* AND *RHYS* DID.

TFT

STILL...EVERY TEAM HAS THAT *ONE PERSON*...

...THE ONE *LOOKING* FOR A FIGHT.

〈DON'T BE SILLY, ARIF. I BARELY *KNOW* HER.〉*

*〈TRANSLATED FROM AZERI.〉 - THOMAS.

〈SO YOU DIDN'T EVEN TELL HER YOUR NAME? C'MON, FIDAN.〉

〈I WAS TOO EMBARRASSED.〉

〈I...〉

〈FIDAN?〉

〈FIDAN, WHAT'S WRONG?〉

WE'VE BEEN MADE, COMMANDER.

I have him.

STAND DOWN, *DEUTSCHE 1*. AND KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, TORO 1.

I SAID STAND DOWN!

BECKER, DON'T, MAN. IT'S NOT--

<BROTHER, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!>

NOT A WORD.

PEWT

<FIDAN!>

KLAK

SHIT, BECKER...HE WAS JUST A *KID*.

BECKER'S A #@!$%&# *PSYCHO*.

YOU DISOBEYED A ***DIRECT ORDER***, DEUTSCHE 1.

AND NOW WE HAVE AN ***UNSANCTIONED CASUALTY*** ON OUR HANDS.

THEY ARE ***ALL*** DEAD ANYWAY. THEY JUST DON'T ***KNOW*** IT YET.

LISTEN TO ME, YOU FILTHY *SGLYFATH*, I ***OUTRANK*** YOU!

NOT WHERE *I* COME FROM, *DEPP*.

WE'RE LOSING ***TIME***, COMMANDER.

ALCAZAR IS RIGHT.

TARGET STOWED, RHYS.

WE CAN FIGHT ABOUT THIS LATER, *NON*?

OKAY, GHARBI AND ALCAZAR, YOU TAKE POINT.

CAIRN, YOU'RE WITH ME.

SOTO... KEEP AN EYE ON ***BECKER***.

ROGER THAT.

‹FIDAN... ≥fzzt fzzt≤ YOU THERE?›

KRSH

THIS *PARTICULAR* TEAM WAS SENT AFTER A WARLORD WHO WAS HOARDING HUMANITARIAN AID.

HE WAS *ALSO* SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO WHOMEVER THE UCN DEEMED "*THE ENEMY*."

SILENT EXTRACTION.

ONCE YOU CROSS THAT THRESHOLD, CASUALTIES ARE APPROVED.

CALL SIGNS ON COMMS *ONLY*.

GO.

HERE'S HOPING BECKER CAN FOLLOW ORDERS *THIS TIME*.

CALL SIGNS *ONLY*, YANKEE 1.

SORRY, CYMRY 1.

AND IF HE *DOESN'T* FOLLOW ORDERS...

"...I'LL DO HIM IN *MYSELF*."

THESE SQUADS WERE EFFICIENT TO A *FAULT*.

THEY *HAD TO* BE.

WHO KNOWS *WHAT* THEY'D ENCOUNTER ON A MISSION.

SKULCH

They're yours, Carthage 1.

Roger, Toro 1.

TARGET DOWN.

KRAK

CHARLIE MIKE.

THIS IS TAKING *TOO LONG.*

ROGER THAT.

CYMRY 1 TO DEUTSCHE 1. I NEED A SITREP.

fzzt

CYMRY 1 TO *SAKURA 1.* DO YOU COPY?

REPEAT. CYMRY 1 TO SAKURA--

SAKURA 1 TO CYMRY 1. TORO 1 AND I ENCOUNTERED COMBATANTS.

CARTHAGE 1 IS SETTING CHARGES NOW. BREACH ON YOUR COUNT.

YMLAEN!

LET'S ***GO.***

WHAM

UCN FORCES! YOU'RE COMING WITH US!

(TELL US *YOUR NAME!*)

MY ***NAME?*** WHAT DOES YOUR ***MISSION BRIEF*** SAY MY NAME IS?

THE UCN NEEDS A VILLAIN, SO THEY CHOOSE ***ME?*** I AM A ***BUSINESSMAN.***

SCAN HIS FACE, TORO 1.

ON IT.

THEY...

PEWT

SHIT, BECKER, THE SCAN WASN'T *DONE.*

DOESN'T MATTER. IT'S HIM.

LIKE I SAID... SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST *LOOKING* FOR A FIGHT.

POSSIBLE MATCH TARGE

=gnnf= YOUR GOVERNMENTS *LIE* TO YOU!

THIS IS DEUTSCHE 1 ON ALL CHANNELS. JACKPOT, REPEAT. *JACKPOT.*

WE'RE INCOMING, CYMRY 1.

THIS IS YANKEE 1. SECURING EGRESS NOW.

ROGER THAT. DEUTSCHE 1 HAS THE PACKAGE.

NEGATIVE. PACKAGE IS OUT OF PLAY.

DAMN YOU, BECKER! HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE TO--

COMMAND ONLINE.

CYMRY 1 TO COMMAND. WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?

SCORCH EARTH, CYMRY 1. REPEAT. *SCORCH EARTH.*

SHIT.

KABOOM

THE SQUAD'S MOTTO WAS "*ADAPT OR DIE.*"

FOLLOW ORDERS, OR... WELL, YOU GET THE *REST.*

THERE WERE NO SURVIVORS IN THAT COMPOUND...AND THAT WAS THE *POINT.*

WHAT *SECRETS* COULD THEY HAVE TOLD?

COMMAND, THIS IS CYMRY 1. WE'RE ON OUR WAY BACK TO BASE.
SHWOOM
BOOOM
THEY'RE HIT!
INCOMING!
WHOOOM
AAARGH
COMMAND! COMMAND, COME IN! ≥koff≤ THIS IS CYMRY 1. WE'VE TAKEN HEAVY FIRE.
RHYS! I'M PINNED! I CAN'T--
I'M COMING, ≥kaff≤ YANKEE 1.
C'MON...MOVE, GWEIADUR!
I...I CAN'T FEEL MY LEGS...
GAH!
SZZZ
THEY'RE DEAD...
WE'RE ALL DEAD...

PHARMATECH SOLUTIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK CITY SIX MONTHS LATER

GOOD MORNING, I'M ***DR. FORNEUS BOZE***, CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER HERE AT PTS.

FIRST, ***THANK YOU*** FOR YOUR SERVICE. YOU'VE ALL SACRIFICED ***SO MUCH*** IN THE NAME OF GLOBAL FREEDOM, AND YOU'RE OWED A ***GREAT*** DEBT.

YOUR GOVERNMENTS HAVE ***ENTRUSTED*** US WITH YOUR CARE, AND WE AIM TO SEE YOU SUCCEED.

YOUR STATE-OF-THE-ART PROSTHETICS ARE NANO-INFUSED TO ***NOT ONLY*** LET YOU REGAIN MOBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE, BUT TO ENHANCE YOUR EVERYDAY LIVES.

MEETING YOUR ***REQUIRED GOALS*** ALSO EARNS YOU A ***BONUS*** FROM YOUR BRANCH OF SERVICE.

YOUR NAME, SON?

FIRST LIEUTENANT PETER CAIRN, SPECIAL FORCES, UCN.

YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH QUITE A ***TRAUMA***, LIEUTENANT CAIRN.

I SEE HERE YOU SERVED WITH ***COMMANDER OWAIN RHYS***.

HE ***NEARLY*** FINISHED OUR PROGRAM SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.

ARE YOU READY TO ***WALK AGAIN***, PETER?

YESSIR. I'LL DO ***WHATEVER*** IT TAKES.

THIS WON'T BE ***EASY***, BUT YOU'RE HEALTHY, AND YOU'VE GOT A GOOD ATTITUDE.

THANK YOU, SIR. I ***WON'T*** LET YOU DOWN.

PREP O.R. FOUR. I'LL DO THE IMPLANTATION MYSELF.

YES, DR. BOZE.

MAYBE IT WAS BEST THEY WERE ALL ASLEEP—OR *MOSTLY* ASLEEP—FOR THE PROCEDURES.

IT WAS LIKE *FRANKENSTEIN* OR THAT CHILDREN'S RHYME ABOUT HUMPTY-SOMETHING FALLING OFF A WALL.

PTS PUT THEM BACK TOGETHER *BUT AT WHAT COST?*

AND THAT'S NOT EVEN TALKING ABOUT ALL THE *PROMISES* THEY MADE

PTS DIDN'T TELL THEM THE *REAL WORK* WAS JUST BEGINNING

SHIT...I SHOULD'VE TRIED *HARDER* TO STOP ALL OF IT.

GET LIEUTENANT CAIRN TO RECOVERY. THE *NANITES* SHOULD INTEGRATE WITHIN THE HOUR.

KEEP ME POSTED IF *ANYTHING* GOES WRONG.

UNDERSTOOD, DR. BOZE.

THREE MONTHS LATER

YOU'RE DOING *GREAT*, PETER.

THANKS, MAX. YOU, TOO.

DR. BOZE WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU IN HIS OFFICE, MAX.

YEAH, OKAY...

HEY...

DR. AMMON... WHERE'S MAX GOING?

FOCUS ON *YOUR OWN* RECOVERY, PETER.

HEALING IS AN INDIVIDUAL AND *COMPLICATED* PROCESS.

NOW... LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ON THE TREADMILL.

HOW DOES IT FEEL, LIEUTENANT?

FEELS GREAT, DR. AMMON.

SHALL WE INCREASE THE SPEED AND INCLINE?

LET'S *DO* IT.

PETER TRIED. *NO ONE* CAN SAY HE DIDN'T.

HELL, RHYS TRIED, TOO.

THEY *ALL* TRIED.

BUT PTS HAD *IMPOSSIBLE* STANDARDS.

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF IT WAS *DR. BOZE* OR *THE CHAIRMAN* MAKING THESE DECISIONS.

LET'S LOOK AT THOSE STATS, LIEUTENANT CAIRN.

I FEEL STRONGER AND =huff= FASTER ALREADY.

Hmm... AMMON, I HAD EXPECTED *MORE* FROM HIM BY NOW.

HE IS PUTTING IN THE EFFORT, THERE'S *NO DOUBT* ABOUT THAT.

BUT THE *RESULTS* AREN'T HERE.

EVERYTHING =huff= OKAY OVER THERE, DOC?

FINISH YOUR CYCLE, PETER, AND THEN MEET ME IN MY OFFICE... *PLEASE*.

I HAD SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU, DR. BOZE.

I NOTICED ***A LOT*** OF THE OTHER VETS AREN'T IN THE PROGRAM ANYMORE.

SOME OF THEM STARTED ***AFTER*** ME, SO I WAS JUST WONDERING WHERE THEY WENT.

NOW, LIEUTENANT CAIRN--

ARE THEY ***OKAY?***

YOU KNOW WE CAN'T DISCUSS ANOTHER PATIENT'S PROGRESS--

I CAN ONLY DISCUSS ***YOURS.***

WE UNDERSTAND THIS IS A ***DIFFICULT*** TIME, BUT BOTH PTS ***AND*** YOUR GOVERNMENT HAVE INVESTED A ***SIGNIFICANT*** AMOUNT IN YOUR REHABILITATION AND RECOVERY.

AND, ***UNFORTUNATELY***, YOU JUST HAVEN'T BEEN ACHIEVING THE ***BENCHMARKS*** NEEDED TO CONTINUE TREATMENT.

SO... WHAT' DO YOU MEAN? YOU'RE WASHING ME OUT?

IT ***MEANS*** YOU GET TO ***KEEP*** YOUR STATE-OF-THE-ART PROSTHETIC LEGS...

"...BUT YOU'RE OF NO FURTHER ***USE*** TO US."

AND JUST LIKE ***RHYS*** BEFORE HIM, ***PETER*** WAS THROWN ASIDE... LIKE ***SO*** MANY OTHERS.

#@!$%&# ***BULLSHIT***

2111

ADAPT OR DIE

PETER IS A *SURVIVOR.* HE *ADAPTS.*

OTHER VETS TOOK THEIR OWN LIVES.

HONESTLY, WHO COULD *BLAME* THEM IN THIS WORLD?

SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE ALL IN A *DARK HOLE* SOMEWHERE.

HOW'S IT *GOIN'* DOWN THERE, PETE?

YOU FIND THAT *LEAK* YET?

NOT YET.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING *WEIRD* DOWN HERE. I THINK--

DON'T THINK. JUST DO *THE JOB.*

RIGHT, RIGHT...DROP A CANTEEN DOWN, WILL YOU? IT'S HOT AS HELL DOWN HERE.

Oh, shit.

JIMMY, WHAT'S *GOING ON* UP THERE?

THIS *BETTER NOT* BE A DAMN PRANK.

ANOTHER TIME
ANOTHER PLACE

WHEN *AL SIMMONS* SUCCEEDED IN THE *NECROPLASMIC DETONATION* IN 2019, IT NOT ONLY AFFECTED *HIS* REALITY...

...IT AFFECTED *ALL* REALITIES.

THOUSAND KA

RRRUMMMBLLEE

THE RIPPLES OF *ONE HELLSPAWN'S ACTIONS* WOULD CASCADE THROUGH *TIME* AND *SPACE*.

WAIT!

PETER WAS TRAPPED

HIS PROSTHETIC LEGS LOCKED UP ON HIM

...AND HE WAS LOSING MORE THAN JUST HIS GRIP ON THE ROADWAY.

DAMN

AAH!

SHIT! MOVE YOU DAMN LEGS!

C'MON, DAMNIT!

KRK

TOK

WE WERE *ALL* AFFECTED BY THE BLACKOUT...

...SOME IN WAYS WE COULDN'T *EVER* EXPLAIN.

PETER WAS CHANGED BEYOND *ANYTHING* HE COULD IMAGINE

PTS HEADQUARTERS

...AND HE THOUGHT HE WAS THE *ONLY ONE*

WE'RE RUNNING EMERGENCY BACKUP POWER, BUT--

WE *CAN'T* LOSE THIS BATCH OF TEST SUBJECTS OR *DR. BOZE* WILL HAVE OUR *HEADS!*

DO WHAT YOU CAN TO *STABILIZE* THEM.

AAAH!

BZZT

GET US BACK TO FULL POWER. *NOW!*

THE BLACKOUT TOOK *EVERYONE* BY SURPRISE.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WOULD STUDY ITS EFFECTS FOR *DECADES*.

AND POOR PETER WAS STUCK IN A *DAMN HOLE*.

SHIT. THE *LADDER'S* BROKEN. MY PHONE'S *DEAD*.

JIMMY! YOU STILL THERE?

ANYONE?!

HE HAD *NO IDEA* THE *CHAOS* GOING ON TOPSIDE.

ADAPT OR DIE, YANKEE 1.

QUIT FEELING *SORRY* FOR YOURSELF AND GET YOUR ASS *OUTTA THIS #@!$%&# HOLE!*

ALLEY...

...OOP!

THE WAY PETER TELLS IT, HE LOOKED *DAMN COOL!*

BUT THE *CHAOS* HAD ALREADY STARTED

...AND IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH FOR PEOPLE TO *TURN* ON EACH OTHER

JUST TURN OUT THE LIGHTS.

THIS IS *NUTS!*

WHAT THE *HELL*, MAN?

I'M JUST TRYING TO GET BY.

BUMP

DON'T YOU TRY AN' BOOST OUR STUFF. WE GOT *DIBS*.

I DON'T *GIVE* A SHIT. JACK WHAT YOU *WANT*. I'M GOING HOME.

WE *EARNED* THIS SCORE. WE'RE GONNA GET OURS.

GOOD FOR YOU. NOW GET THE @#$! OUTTA MY WAY!

WE AIN'T DONE.
NOPE.
WE ARE! NOW MOVE!
SOMEONE'S ALWAYS LOOKING TO FIGHT.
SOMETHING TOOK A HOLD OF HIM.
I SAID...
I'M GOING...
PETER WAS A SOLDIER. HE COULD FIGHT. BUT THIS... WAS SOMETHING ELSE.
HOME!
>pant< THE HELL'S WRONG WITH ME? MY HEAD...IS POUNDING. Ugh...

RAT CITY ON THE BOWERY

LIKE MOST OF US *DREGS*, PETER LIVED IN RAT CITY.

THE GOVERNMENT SHOVED US INTO TINY APARTMENTS ALL THE WHILE PROCLAIMING THEIR *COMPASSION* FOR THE DOWNTRODDEN.

C'MON...

KLIK KLIK

IT WAS CRAMPED, AND THERE WERE OUTBREAKS *ALL* THE TIME.

IF YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE BOWERY, THIS WAS HISTORY *REPEATING* ITSELF.

MEANWHILE, THE *ELITES* ARE HIGH UP IN THEIR TOWERS... THEIR FEET *NEVER* TOUCH THE GROUND.

TALE AS OLD AS TIME...THE *HAVES*... AND THE *HAVE NOTS*.

KA CHNK

GOOD, *POWER'S* BACK ON. DIDN'T WANNA HAVE TO KICK THE DOOR IN AND DEAL WITH THE *SUPER'S BULLSHIT*.

NOW WHERE'S MY PHONE CHARGER...?

...FROM OWAIN RHYS.

GREAT... WHAT'S *MORE* BAD NEWS?

NEW MESSAGE...

KLK

HEYA, PETER, IT'S ***RHYS***.

I KNOW WE HAVEN'T CHATTED IN A WHILE, BUT THERE'S SOME SHIT WE ***REALLY*** NEED TO TALK ABOUT.

I'VE BEEN ***LOOKING INTO*** SOMETHING...

BEST NOT TO SAY ON THE MACHINE.

GIMME A BUZZ BACK FOR OLD TIME'S--

KLK

SORRY, RHYS, BUT I GOT ***NO PATIENCE*** FOR THIS RIGHT NOW.

PETER AND RHYS WERE THE ***ONLY*** SURVIVORS OF THE ROADSIDE ATTACK IN ALAT.

THEY WERE LAUDED AS ***HEROES***.

BUT EVEN HEROES GET ***THROWN AWAY*** IN THIS WORLD WHEN THEY OUTLIVE THEIR USEFULNESS.

PETER JUST FELT LIKE A PAWN... REWARDED FOR GOING ACROSS THE WORLD KILLING ***WHOMEVER*** THE UCN TOLD HIM TO.

HE ONCE TOLD ME THAT, AFTER THE ACCIDENT, HE ***SWORE*** NOT TO KILL AGAIN.

IT'S FUNNY THE ***PROMISES*** WE MAKE TO OURSELVES...KNOWING WE'LL ***NEVER*** KEEP THEM.

=sigh=

OKAY, YANKEE 1, YOU'RE ***HOME***... JUST GET THESE DAMNED LEGS OFF, AND--

TCK TCK

OH, COME ON!

GET OFFA ME, YOU ***STUPID #@!$%&# LEGS!***

COME ON!

A BUTTERFLY FLAPS ITS WINGS IN BRAZIL AND IT CREATES A TORNADO IN KANSAS...

SHAZZ

AARGH!

...OR *SOMETHING* LIKE THAT.

NO!

AL SIMMONS CHANGED *EVERYTHING*.

AND *NO ONE* KNEW WHAT WOULD CHANGE *NEXT*.

RAT CITY #2

COVER BY BJÖRN BARENDS

PETER CAIRN'S APARTMENT
RAT CITY

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

PETER DIDN'T KNOW WHAT AL SIMMONS HAD DONE...

...OR HOW IT AFFECTED THE *NANITES* IN HIS BODY.

IT'D BE A WHILE BEFORE *ANY* OF US LEARNED WHAT *REALLY* HAPPENED DURING THE BLACKOUT...

WHUMP

P.T.S. HEADQUARTERS

ALL THE EXPERIMENTS ARE STABILIZED, DR. BOZE.

HAVE WE FOUND WHAT *CAUSED* THE SEIZURES?

NO, BUT THEY'VE BEEN EXHIBITING NORMAL VITALS THE PAST FOUR HOURS.

AND THE NANITES?

THEY DON'T SEEM *TOO* AFFECTED BY THE ENERGY SURGE.

TOO AFFECTED!?

THERE'S *TRILLIONS* OF DOLLARS OF HARD-WARE IN THESE PEOPLE. WE HAVE TO BE *SURE* IT WASN'T DAMAGED!

KEEP *EVERYONE* SEDATED UNTIL I GET BACK.

I'LL SPEAK TO *THE CHAIRMAN* ABOUT THIS!

SEND A MESSAGE TO *ANYONE* WITH A PROSTHETIC FROM THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

YOU THINK OUR *OLDER MODELS* HAVE ISSUES, TOO?

WE'LL CHECK *EVERYTHING* TO BE SURE.

WHAT IF THE OLD PATIENTS DON'T COME *WILLINGLY?* SOME AREN'T EVEN IN *NEW YORK* ANYMORE.

TELL THEM WE'RE GIVING *FREE UPGRADES.* ONCE WE HAVE THEM HERE, WE CAN DO MORE *INVASIVE* TESTS.

UP AN' AT 'EM, PETE.

WE'VE GOT AN *APPOINTMENT*.

HOW LONG WAS I OUT?

YOU TELL *ME*. YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY CALLS, SO--

YOU CAME TO *CHECK* ON ME.

GOTTA KEEP TABS ON WHAT'S LEFT OF *MY TEAM*.

WHAT'S THIS *APPOINTMENT?*

P.T.S. IS GIVING OUT *FREE UPGRADES*.

THEY LEFT YOU A *MESSAGE*, TOO. YOU ASLEEP THAT *WHOLE TIME?*

DON'T REMEMBER *ANYTHING* AFTER THE BLACKOUT.

WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT. ADAPT OR DIE, *RIGHT?*

IF YOU *SAY SO*, RHYS.

I NEED YOUR *HELP* WITH SOME-THING.

I'VE BEEN TALKING TO SOMEONE WHO *REALLY* OPENED MY EYES.

YOU TRYING TO RECRUIT ME FOR SOME *CULT*, RHYS?

HA! I LOOK LIKE AN ALTAR BOY TO *YOU?*

YOU AN' YOUR CATHOLIC GUILT.

QUINLAN USED TO WORK AT P.T.S. THEY'VE GOT *TONS* OF SHIT ON THE THINGS DR. BOZE AND HIS *TWLL DYNS* DID TO US.

BETCHA THIS "APPOINTMENT" IS TO COVER THEIR ASSES FOR THE *BLACKOUT*.

YOU THINK *P.T.S.* CAUSED IT?

DIDN'T YOU FEEL SOMETHING *WEIRD* WHEN IT HIT?

"I WAS IN A HOLE AT *WORK*, RHYS. MY LEGS LOCKED UP."

"SO YOU DIDN'T SEE *ANYTHING* WHEN IT HIT?"

NOT EVEN *AFTER?*

I...

P.T.S.

PHARMATECH SOLUTIONS

RIGHT, WELL JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD ON A SWIVEL IN THERE, *OKAY?*

WHAT AM I *LOOKING* FOR?

DON'T KNOW... BUT *SOMETHING* DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.

APARTMENT OF QUINLAN WALI RAT CITY

MAYBE THINGS WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT IF I'D FIGURED IT OUT SOONER.

I SHOULD'VE *NEVER* TRUSTED THAT STUPID POWER BOOSTER.

IT FRIED MY SYSTEM AND F*CKED UP EVERYTHING!

GOTTA SAVE EVERY-THING I CAN BEFORE--

NO... THEY *CAN'T* BE...

I HOPED I WASN'T TOO LATE

It's comin'...

WE KNOW HOW LONG THIS IS GONNA TAKE?

YOU GOT SOMEPLACE TO *BE*, PETE?

YEAH. I'D LIKE TO GET A *SHIFT* TONIGHT. I DUNNO ABOUT YOU...

...BUT THE V.A. CUT MY BENEFITS WHEN I GOT THESE LIMBS...

...SOMETHING ABOUT HAVING AN "*ADVANTAGE*" GETTING BACK TO SOCIETY.

HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT YOUR *FOREMAN* WAS ONE OF YOUR MISSED MESSAGES.

SAID YOU WENT AWOL?

Shit.

IT'LL BE OKAY. I'VE GOTTA PLACE YOU CAN KIP.

THANKS.

COMMANDER RHYS?

IT'S JUST MR. RHYS NOW... OR *OWAIN*, IF YOU'RE MY MUM.

PLEASE LEAVE YOUR BELONGINGS HERE, AND COME WITH ME.

HOLD THIS FOR ME, WILL YA, YANKEE?

BE CAREFUL IN THERE.

AYE... KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN OUT HERE.

RHYS WAS SUPPOSED TO BRING PETER AS *BACK UP.*

PETER HAD *NO IDEA* WHAT HE WAS GETTING INTO.

BREEP

Huh?

RHYS, PICK UP, *DAMNIT!*

QUINLAN 313-4123

QUINLAN... IT'D BE *RUDE* TO ANSWER.

DID YOU *SEE IT?*

PARDON?

THE *DEMON*... IT'S COMING FOR US 'CAUSE OF ALL THE *BAD SHIT* WE DID OVER THERE!

IT'S OKAY, MAN. WE'RE JUST GETTING *UPGRADES.*

DON'T BE FOOLED...THERE AIN'T NO *ANGELS* BEHIND THOSE DOORS.

GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, COMMANDER.

I'M NOT IN THE SERVICE ANYMORE, DR. BOZE.

WELL, WE'RE *ALWAYS* IN THE SERVICE OF *SOMETHING*.

WHERE'S *DR. AMMON?* ALWAYS LIKED HIM.

AMMON LEFT A FEW YEARS AGO. HE NO LONGER BELIEVED IN OUR *VISION*.

Um, WHAT'S WITH THE *NEEDLE?*

THIS WILL HELP YOU *RELAX*.

I THOUGHT THIS WAS JUST AN *UPGRADE*.

TRUST ME.

DOC... I...

GET HIM PREPPED. I WANT HIS HANDS ON MY TABLE *NOW!*

I FORGOT HOW MANY MESSAGES I LEFT.

RHYS, IF YOU GET THIS, I HACKED INTO THE DAILY COMMS AT P.T.S. YOU AND PETER ARE IN *DANGER*.

YOU'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF THERE. DR. BOZE ISN'T GIVING *UPGRADES*...

"...HE WANTS TO *DISSECT* YOU!"

SNKT

WHERE'S THAT BLOOD SAMPLE?

HERE YOU ARE, DR. BOZE.

GOOD. THE NANITES SEEM TO STILL BE WORKING FINE.

I'VE ISOLATED *ONE* OF THEM FROM THE SAMPLE.

NOW BRING UP HIS BASELINE SO WE HAVE A COMPARISON.

Hmm... NOTHING ***SEEMS*** OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

Uhhh...

GET ME A SAMPLE OF THE NANITES DIRECTLY FROM THE PROSTHETIC HANDS. I NEED A SIDE BY SIDE.

YES, SIR.

TNK

GHKK!

WHAT THEY DID TO RHYS IGNITED A *RAGE* WITHIN HIM THAT QUICKLY TURNED TO *PURE HATRED*.

GET SECURITY IN HERE! *NOW!*

Man... WHAT THE HELL'S *TAKING* SO LONG?

WHOOP WHOOOP

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?

I'M TALKING TO YOU!

ANSWER ME, DAMNIT!

THE *HELL--?*

LEAVE IT. *C'MON!*

SLAM

HEY! MY FRIEND'S IN THERE!

BOTH RHYS AND PETER HAD STARTED THEIR *TRANSFORMATIONS*...

BUT *WHAT* WERE THEY BECOMING?

NO!

STAY BACK!

WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING AT?

THIS WASN'T THE *FIRST TIME* RHYS HAD GUNS POINTED AT HIM

...OR EVEN THE FIRST TIME SOMEONE SAW HIM AS A *MONSTER*

GOD, WHAT *HAPPENED* TO HIM?!

COMMANDER RHYS...*OWAIN*... WE'RE TRYING TO *HELP* YOU.

GUARDS, PUT YOUR WEAPONS DOWN.

THERE'S NO NEED TO DAMAGE THIS SPECIMEN... HE'S MERELY A *DEVIANT*.

HE'S MOVING!

BLAM

A DEVIANT...

...THAT'S WHAT THEY WOULD CALL ALL OF THEM.

SLISH

CEASE FIRE! NOW!

WRASH

IF YOU WON'T OPEN THE DOOR...

...I'LL DO IT MYSELF!

IT'S HERE... IT'S HERE FOR *US.*

WHAM

SHUT UP WITH YOUR GOD DAMN DELUSIONS AND ***HELP*** ME!

WHOOM

TNT

EVERYTHING HAPPENED *SO FAST.*

RHYS *TRIED* TO HELP PETER, BUT

HE'S *DOWN.* MOVE IN.

KRAK

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

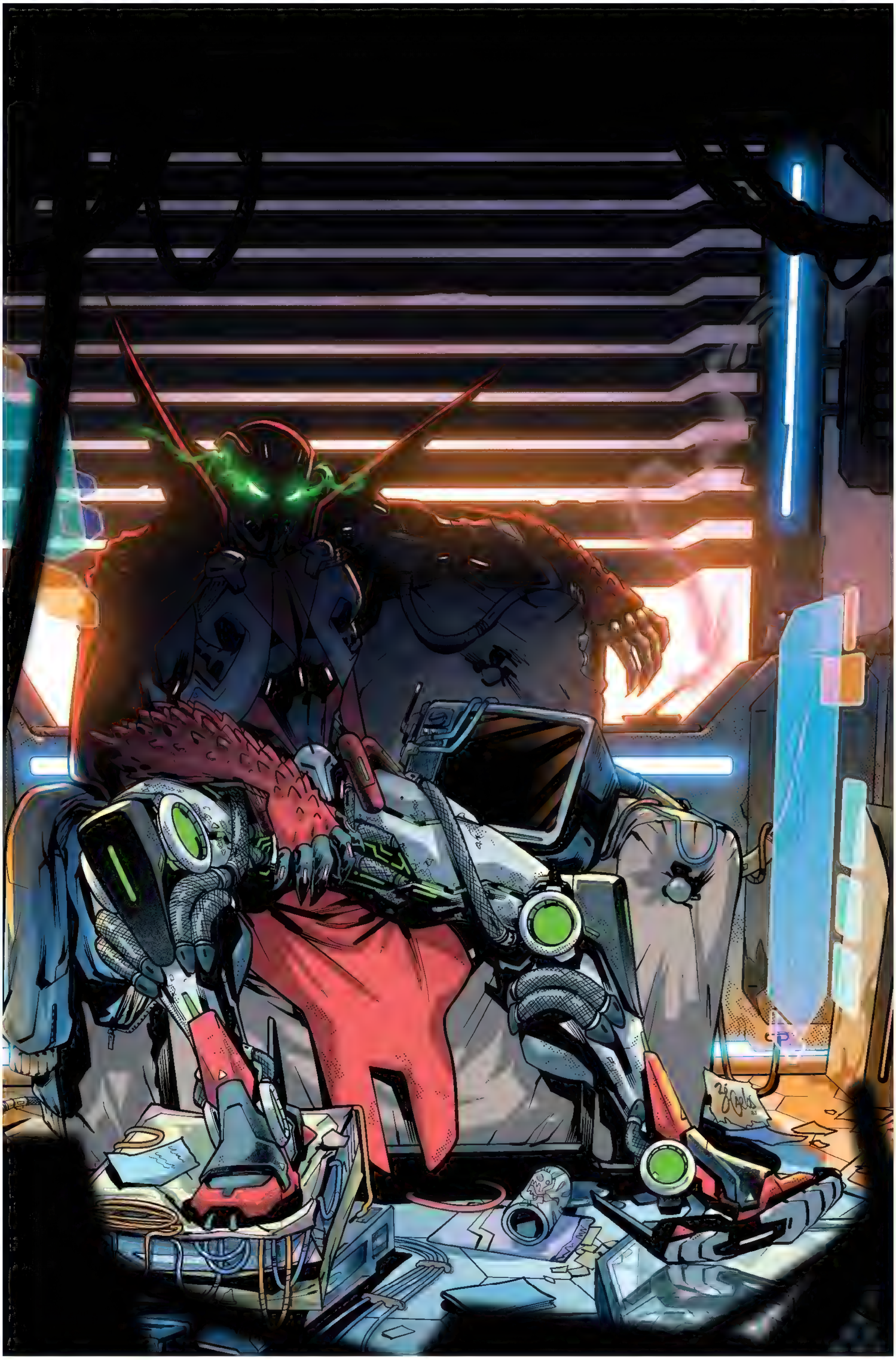
RHYS, C'MON, GET UP!

FIND... QUINLAN... THEY...CAN HELPPP...

YOU HURT MY FRIEND...

IT'S... YOU! YOU'RE THE DEMON!

...NOW YOU'RE GONNA PAY!



RAT CITY #3

COVER BY ZÉ CARLOS

P.T.S. HEADQUARTERS
NOW

FIRE!

AFTER ALL THEY'D ENDURED, PETER AND RHYS WERE THROWN BACK INTO A *WAR ZONE*...

...BUT THE SUIT WOULDN'T LET *ANYTHING* HAPPEN TO THEM.

I'M GONNA GET YOU OUT OF HERE, RHYS.

JUST HOLD ON.

PETE... WHAT...*ARE* YOU?

PETER WAS WORKING ON *PURE ADRENALINE*...

AND INSTINCT

I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY.

WHUP

STAY WITH ME, OKAY?

I'M GONNA GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL, RHYS.

HELP!

GET OUTTA DA WAY, YA FREAK!

HONK

WAIT! HELP US!

ADAPT OR DIE...

MAKE SURE TO GET ***EVERY DROP*** OF BLOOD. AND I WANT EACH NANITE CHECKED.

YES, DR. BOZE.

I HAVE TO BRIEF ***THE CHAIRMAN***, AND I WANT TO BE PREPARED.

hmm... what's this?

SFX: DREEP

RHYS? ARE YOU--

IS THIS QUINLAN WALI?

OH, SHIT.

WE HAVEN'T SPOKEN SINCE YOU WERE ***FIRED***.

HOW'D THAT ***WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINT*** WORK OUT FOR YOU?

WHAT'D YOU BASTARDS DO TO RHYS? WHAT'S THIS THING ON THE NEWS?!

I ADMIT, I DON'T KNOW ***WHAT*** IT IS...

...BUT =fzzt= I AIM TO FIND OUT

SFX: plop

TRACE THAT CALL. I WANT MX. WALI BROUGHT IN. ***ALIVE***. WE DON'T KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE BREACH AND I WANT THAT ***DATA*** BACK.

FIND WHO THAT CAPED DEVIANT WAS.

SIR, THE SIGN-IN SHOWS IT WAS LIEUTENANT CAIRN.

FIND HIM.

ST. RAYMOND'S CEMETERY
THE BRONX

I WANTED A HOSPITAL, NOT A DAMNED CEMETERY!

IT'S... WHERE I BELONG.

DON'T SAY THAT, RHYS.

I THINK =KOFF= SATO, GHARBI...GOT OFF EASY.

FIND... QUINLAN.

I WILL.

I WASN'T THERE WHEN RHYS DIED

EVEN STILL...COULD I HAVE FACED HIM?

HEY!

STAY WHERE YOU ARE.

GET HIM!

THE SHADOW-WALKING...

THE SUIT

CHRIST! WHAT'S GOING ON?

...IT WAS A LOT TO TAKE IN ALL AT ONCE.

WHAT THE HELL AM I?

BUT HE HAD HAD *ENOUGH*.

PETER DIDN'T WANT TO *ADAPT* ANYMORE.

SNAP

HE WANTED TO *DIE*.

THE SUIT WOULDN'T LET HIM.

SOMETIMES THE BEST THING TO DO IS JUST *LET GO* OF YOUR WANT TO CONTROL...

...'CAUSE NONE OF US HAVE ANY *ACTUAL* CONTROL IN THE FIRST PLACE.

I UNDERSTOOD WHERE PETER WAS COMING FROM.

HELL, I WANTED TO DIE, TOO.

I KNOW I WAS BEING AN IDIOT.

I JUST NEEDED TO FEEL SOMETHING...

OPEN UP!

BAM BAM

ONE SEC.

TAKE IT DOWN.

WAIT!

PETER, MY NAME IS QUINLAN. YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT--

KLK

WHAM

FAN OUT.

HE'S NOT IN THE JOHN.

THAT'S A MEDAL FOR ***BRAVERY*** FROM THE U.C.N.

SO?

IT DON'T FEEL ***RIGHT*** GOING AFTER A VET.

JUST CHECK OUT THE WINDOW, WILL YA?

FOUND HIM!

I GIVE UP.

DON'T MOVE.

YOU KILLED MY FRIEND.

HANDS IN THE AIR! NOW!

NO.

TAKE HIM DOWN!

PETER HAD MORE POWER THAN HE THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

HE JUST NEEDED TO *CONTROL* IT.

GET ME A LINE TO DR. BOZE. *NOW!*

TELL HIM WE LOST *THE DEVIANT.*

DR. BOZE?

THE SECURITY TEAM CALLED IN.

AND? DON'T MAKE ME KEEP THE CHAIRMAN WAITING.

THEY *LOST* LIEUTENANT CAIRN.

DAMNIT!

LEAK TO THE MEDIA THAT THE ***MONSTER DEVIANT*** THEY SAW WITH OWAIN RHYS WAS LIEUTENANT CAIRN.

YOU TELL THEM THAT CAIRN KILLED A ***BONAFIDE WAR HERO***, AND THAT P.T.S. IS OFFERING A ***REWARD*** FOR ***ANYONE*** WHO HAS INFORMATION ON HIS WHEREABOUTS.

GO!

'EVENING, MR. CHAIRMAN.

COME ON IN...

WE COME ON AIR TONIGHT WITH **BREAKING NEWS...**

CAPTAIN OWAIN RHYS WAS A DECORATED OFFICER AND LEADER IN THE CONFLICT IN THE CAUCUSES.

QUINLAN?

HIS MURDER COMES AS A SHOCK TO MANY IN THE VETERAN COMMUNITY AS HIS KILLER WAS NONE OTHER THAN FELLOW VETERAN, LIEUTENANT PETER CAIRN.

Huh?!

I WON'T HURT YOU.

THEY'RE SAYING RHYS IS DEAD...IS IT ***TRUE?***

YES.

DID YOU ***DO*** IT? DID YOU ***KILL*** HIM?

NO.

RHYS WAS LIKE A ***BROTHER*** TO ME. HE SAVED MY LIFE IN ALAT.*

*SEE RAT CITY #1. —THOMAS

I ***SAW*** THE FOOTAGE ON THE STREET. A DRONE CAUGHT YOU WITH HIM, THEN YOU JUST... ***DISAPPEARED!***

WHERE IS HE? WHERE'D YOU ***TAKE*** HIM?

HE'S IN ST. RAYMOND'S CEMETERY...WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM WE LOST IN ALAT.

I DIDN'T HURT HIM, QUINLAN...I ***SWEAR.***

I'VE SEEN YOUR FILE. I KNOW WHAT YOU AND RHYS HAVE DONE.

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE DID SOME ***AWFUL*** SHIT, AND I'M PAYING FOR IT NOW.

WHATEVER THIS THING IS... IT HELPED ME GET RHYS OUT OF PTS. IT'LL HELP ME ***FIGHT*** THEM.

AND I ***WANT*** TO KEEP FIGHTING.

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO HELP ***ME?***

HE ASKED FOR MY HELP, AND I'M GONNA HELP HIM... EVEN IF HE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE.

P.T.S. MESSED ME UP, TOO. I THINK ***THEY*** CAUSED THE BLACKOUT, AND ***EVERY-THING*** THAT'S MESSED UP RIGHT NOW.

IN THE SERVICE, RHYS TAUGHT US TO "ADAPT OR DIE," AND NOW THAT RHYS IS GONE...SHIT... I'D RATHER ***DIE***.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT ***HE'D*** WANT.

RHYS TOLD ME TO ***FIND*** YOU-- HELP YOU FINISH WHATEVER YOU TWO STARTED TOGETHER.

AND I'LL BE DAMNED IF I DON'T AT LEAST ***TRY.***

...

P.T.S. DIDN'T CAUSE THE BLACKOUT, PETER...

...I DID.

RAT CITY #4

COVER BY MARK SPEARS

APARTMENT OF QUINLAN WALI
APPROXIMATELY FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AGO

I *REALLY* SCREWED UP

I *THOUGHT* I HAD IT FIGURED OUT, BUT...

...THE POWER BOOSTER THAT WAS *SUPPOSED* TO HELP WITH THE DECRYPTION OF PTS' FILES BLEW OUT MY WHOLE SYSTEM.

OW, *SHIT!*

TSSS

NO.

NO.

NO!

WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

THEN THE ALARMS WENT OFF.

WHEN THE ENERGY WAVE HIT.

I THOUGHT IT WAS *THE END OF THE WORLD!*

I SAVED EVERY FILE POSSIBLE BEFORE THE BOOSTER SHIT THE BED.

C'MON!

I WOULDN'T KNOW 'TIL LATER IF IT WAS ENOUGH.

UNPLUG YOU STUPID--

THEN THINGS GOT WORSE.

SHHHHH

OKAY... EVERYTHING'S FINE...I'M--

BAM BAM

WHAM

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING.

HAD THE SECURITY FORCES ALREADY *FOUND* ME?

THEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT...

...AND I HEARD HIM *SCREAM.*

HELLO?

WHO THE HELL?

RHYS!

I'M =pant= ALRIGHT... JUST...GOTTA CATCH MY BREATH.

SHUNK

SHIT. THE DOOR *WON'T OPEN!*

'CAUSE THE POWER'S OUT.

JUST... BACK AWAY FOR A SEC.

RUNCH

GUESS I WON'T GET MY SECURITY DEPOSIT BACK NOW.

SORRY 'BOUT THAT.

YOU OKAY?

AM *NOW.*

sniff sniff SOMETHING *BURNING?*

IT'S... NOTHING.

YOU *SURE?*

YEAH. IT'S JUST...*heh*... I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE ***SECURITY FORCES*** OR SOMETHING.

WAIT, WHY WOULD THEY--

Y'KNOW WHAT? DOESN'T MATTER.

YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

RHYS...

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE?!

YOU SOUNDED LIKE YOU WERE IN A LOTTA PAIN, AND--

DON'T WORRY 'BOUT *ME*.

ADAPT OR DIE, REMEMBER?

YEAH, WELL, *uh*...KEEP ADAPTING, THEN. WE NEED YOU AROUND.

YOU...DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION.

I THOUGHT-- WHEN YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY MESSAGES, I GOT *WORRIED*.

AND I *MISSED* YOU.

QUINLAN?

YEAH?

PLEASE DON'T LIE. TELL ME, WHAT HAPPENED?

I F*CKED UP.

...AND I LET HIM DOWN.

I MISS RHYS

BROOKLYN BRIDGE NOW

PETER WOULDN'T LET ME DIE, NO MATTER *HOW MUCH* I FELT LIKE I DESERVED IT.

MAYBE HE JUST WANTED ANSWERS.

OR MAYBE IT'S THE PROMISE HE MADE TO RHYS.

EITHER WAY...HE WASN'T GOING TO LET ME GO

HOLD ON.

I'VE GOT YOU!

WHEN WE HIT THE NEXT ROOFTOP, WE KEPT GOING.

APARTMENT OF OWAIN RHYS

LEMME GO!

HUWARGH!

YOU OKAY?

Uh... YEAH.

HOW ARE YOU *DOING* ALL OF THIS, PETER?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, BUT THIS SUIT IS KINDA DOING IT ON ITS OWN...BUT STILL FOLLOWING MY INSTINCTS. I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT.

LOOKS LIKE THE SECURITY FORCE HAD FUN.

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

FOCUS, QUINLAN.

WHAT WERE THEY LOOKING FOR?

dunno.

YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO TRUST ME.

TRUST WASN'T SOMETHING I GAVE FREELY.

OKAY... RHYS TOLD YOU I USED TO WORK AT P.T.S. BUT THAT WAS ONLY *PART* OF IT.

P.T.S. HEADQUARTERS
THREE YEARS EARLIER

"I WAS A TECH ANALYST TASKED WITH CREATING A NEW STREAMLINED DATABASE.

"I WAS FINDING *ENCRYPTED FILES* WITH NO CLASSIFICATION.

"I GOT CURIOUS AND WAS ABLE TO BREAK THE ENCRYPTION ON A FEW OF THEM.

"IT WAS *HORRIBLE.*

"DR. BOZE AND DR. AMMON PUT *ALL KINDS* OF EXPERIMENTAL CRAP INTO THEIR PATIENTS.

"THEY WERE USING YOU ALL AS *GUINEA PIGS.*

"I SAW YOURS AND RHYS' FILES AMONG THE GROUP, AND...I JUST HAD TO DO *SOMETHING.*

"SO I JACKED THE DATA AND SENT A WHISTLEBLOWER COMPAINT TO THE GOVERNMENT.

"I FIGURED *THEY'D* HAVE THE JUICE TO DECRYPT THE FILES I COULDN'T.

"MY 'CONTACT' SAID I'D BE SAFE.

AND YOU HAVEN'T MADE A COPY OR SHARED IT WITH ***ANYONE?***

NOT A SOUL.

"THE GOVERNMENT AND P.T.S. ARE IN BED SO DEEP, YOU CAN'T SEPARATE THEM.

"THE NEXT DAY, THEY FIRED ME...

"SHE WAS A PLANT FOR THE CHAIRMAN...

"...KICKED ME OUT ON MY ASS.

"BUT I STILL WANTED TO ***WARN*** PEOPLE ABOUT WHAT P.T.S. DID TO THEM.

"MOST ***IGNORED*** ME.

"BUT RHYS AGREED TO MEET.

"HE ***LISTENED*** TO ME...MADE ME FEEL LIKE I WASN'T GOING CRAZY.

"HE WAS GOING TO REACH OUT TO OTHER VETS, LIKE YOU, FOR HELP.

"WE WERE GONNA TAKE DOWN P.T.S. AND SAVE THE WORLD TOGETHER."

"RHYS WAS A CHARMER, ALRIGHT. BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME HOW YOU CAUSED THE BLACKOUT."

"I STILL HAD A COPY OF THE ENCRYPTED FILES, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER TO RUN A FULL DECRYPTION PROTOCOL ON THEM.

"I MET ANOTHER TECH-HEAD IN A CHAT ROOM WHO GAVE ME A POWER BOOSTER. HE SAID IT'D DO THE TRICK.

"IT WAS ***SUPPOSED*** TO JUST SUPERCHARGE MY SYSTEM SO I COULD DECODE THE REST OF PTS' FILES."

INSTEAD, IT BLEW A FUSE ON THE ***WHOLE DAMNED CITY.***

WHO KNOWS HOW MANY PEOPLE GOT HURT 'CAUSE OF ME.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT WOULD--

LIEUTENANT CAIRN IS RIGHT, QUINLAN. YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE DOING.

DR. AMMON.

BUT I STILL WANT THOSE FILES.

RAT CITY #5

COVER BY FEDE MELE

CALTECH
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA
MANY YEARS AGO

NOW, AS PER LAST WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT, WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT?

DR. BOZE WOULD SAY HE STARTED OUT AS AN *IDEALIST*.

=yawn=

HE'S FULL OF SHIT.

NO ONE? THIS IS THE ***PREEMINENT*** UNIVERSITY IN THE COUNTRY FOR PHYSICS...

...AND YOU'RE TELLING ME ***NO ONE*** DID THE ***READING?!***

LATER

BUNCH OF SPOILED LITTLE SHITS--

EXCUSE ME, DR. BOZE...

I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT AN ***OPPORTUNITY.***

P.T.S.
YEARS LATER

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO MEET WITH ME, DR. BOZE. I KNOW YOU HAVE ***A LOT*** OF CATCHING UP TO DO IN YOUR NEW ROLE.

YESSIR. ***CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER*** IS QUITE A LEAP FROM OVERSEEING JUST A FEW LABS.

NOW THAT YOU'RE IN THE C-SUITE, YOUR FEET ***NEVER*** HAVE TO TOUCH THE GROUND.

YOU'RE BREATHING ***RAREFIED AIR.***

IT'LL BE NICE TO NOT MINGLE WITH THE ***DREGS*** OF THE CITY. IT REMINDED ME OF TEACHING.

DREADFUL, I REMEMBER. AND THEN YOU WERE PLUCKED FROM ***OBSCURITY,*** AND I BROUGHT YOU ***HERE.*** YOU AND DR. AMMON WERE QUITE AN ***INVESTMENT.***

LET ME GET TO THE POINT, DR. BOZE... PROFITS ARE HOLDING ***STEADY.***

THAT'S GOOD, YES?

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ***FINANCE,*** DO YOU? "STEADY" MEANS ***DECLINE.***

I LEAVE FOR ***BASEL*** IN TWENTY-THREE MINUTES, SO I'LL MAKE THIS BRIEF.

CONSTANT GROWTH IS WHAT WE SHOULD BE STRIVING FOR. SHAREHOLDERS EXPECT A SIGNIFICANT RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENTS.

AND WE'RE NOTHING WITHOUT OUR SHAREHOLD-ERS.

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON SEVERAL PROJECTS OVER THE YEARS. ONE IS WITH... NANOTECH, CORRECT?

YES. DR. AMMON IS THE REAL ROBOTICS EXPERT, BUT WE'VE BEEN DOUBLING OUR EFFORTS ON ORGANIC TISSUE AND MUSCLE REGROWTH.

REAL ORGANS MADE FROM YOUR OWN CELLS. IT WOULD MAKE REJECTION MEDS A THING OF THE PAST.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT FAMILIAR WITH EVERY PRODUCT WE MAKE--I KNOW I'VE LOST COUNT MYSELF-- BUT P.T.S. MANUFACTURES REJECTION DRUGS.

WE DON'T WANT TO MAKE OURSELVES ***OBSOLETE,*** DO WE, DR. BOZÉ?

NO, SIR, MR. CHAIRMAN. SO...

...WHAT ***EXACTLY*** DO YOU WANT?

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO ***SHAKE*** THINGS UP.

GET ***CREATIVE*** WITH THAT NANO IDEA OF YOURS!

THE NANITES ARE DR. AMMON'S--

I'M NOT SAYING SCRAP EVERYTHING...JUST PUT IT ON THE BACK BURNER.

WE'VE ALREADY SPENT ***THOUSANDS*** OF HOURS AND ***BILLIONS*** OF DOLLARS ON--

WE NEED SOMETHING ***FLASHY...***

...SOMETHING THE MARKETING TEAM CAN GET EXCITED ABOUT.

DR. AMMON AND I WERE BROUGHT IN FOR OUR INNOVATIVE ***IDEAS.***

AND I'M ***COUNTING*** ON THOSE IDEAS.

P.T.S. MEANS ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE... AND PEOPLE ARE ***FICKLE***. WE MUST KEEP OUR ***HOLD*** ON THE MARKET.

I GET IT, SIR. WE COULD BRAINSTORM... SEE WHAT WE COME UP WITH.

SPLENDID! I ***KNEW*** I PICKED THE ***RIGHT MAN*** FOR THIS JOB!

WE HAVE SOME MEETINGS WITH NON-UCS GOVERNMENTS. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING ABOUT YOUR IDEAS.

I KNOW THIS WASN'T WHAT YOU ***EXPECTED,*** FORNEUS, BUT EVEN ***I*** HAVE SOMEONE TO ANSWER TO.

IDEALISM OR NOT, MONEY CORRUPTS *EVERYONE*...

...I KNOW *ALL ABOUT* THAT.

DR. BOZE, YOU'RE BACK. HOW'D THE MEETING GO?

THEY DIDN'T...

DAMNIT.

THE CHAIRMAN CUT OUR *FUNDING*, DIDN'T HE?

I *KNEW* THIS WOULD HAPPEN. HE HAS *NO IDEA* THAT WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF--

RELAX, AMMON... HE DIDN'T CUT OUR FUNDING

BUT I THINK IT'S TIME WE TRY A NEW *DIRECTION.*

WE NEED SOMETHING FASTER, NEWER... MORE ***INNOVATIVE...*** WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT ***P.T.S.*** AND ITS SHAREHOLDERS.

I DON'T GIVE A ***DAMN*** ABOUT THEM. WE'RE ***SCIENTISTS.*** WE'RE HERE TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

WELL, THE CHAIRMAN GIVES A DAMN.

LOOK, THERE'S PLENTY WE CAN DO. WE JUST NEED TO MAKE SURE--

WHAT?! THAT THE ***CHAIRMAN*** IS HAPPY?

HE'S ***MY*** BOSS, AND I AM ***YOURS.***

THIS IS WRONG, AND YOU ***KNOW*** IT.

I'D STILL BE TEACHING ROBOTICS AT M.I.T. IF YOU HADN'T BROUGHT ME HERE, AND YOU KNOW WHAT? THAT SOUNDS ***PRETTY GOOD*** RIGHT NOW.

DO YOU ***REALLY*** WANT TO CRAWL BACK TO ACADEMIA WHEN YOU'VE WORKED FOR THE LARGEST, MOST POWERFUL COMPANY IN ***THE WORLD?!***

SO, GO BACK TO WHAT COUNTS AS RAT CITY IN CAMBRIDGE AND ***SCRAPE*** BY, I DON'T CARE.

FINE! BUT I'M TAKING ALL MY RESEARCH. LET'S SEE HOW FAR YOU GET WITHOUT--

EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE HERE IS THE ***PROPERTY*** OF P.T.S. YOUR PATENTS, YOUR NANITE DESIGNS, MICROPROCESSORS, ***ALL*** OF IT!

YOU CAN'T ***DO*** THIS.

WE CAN DO WHATEVER WE WANT, WITH OR ***WITHOUT*** YOU. SO IF YOU WANT A ***SCINTILLA*** OF CONTROL, YOU'LL STAY AND HELP ME.

OR YOU CAN GET ***THE HELL*** OUT.

APARTMENT OF OWAIN RHYS
NOW

AMMON, PUT THE GUN DOWN.

THAT'S ***INCREDIBLE,*** LIEUTENANT. IS THAT A NEW ***EXOSUIT?***

OR DID MY ***NANITES*** DO THAT TO YOU?

IS ***THAT*** WHAT BOZE WAS SECRETLY WORKING ON BEHIND MY BACK? I WONDER IF IT FINALLY MADE THE ***CHAIRMAN*** HAPPY?

TELL ME, HOW DOES THAT SUIT *WORK?*

YOU'RE NOT GONNA DISSECT ME LIKE YOU DID RHYS.

I'M NOT HERE FOR *YOU*, CAIRN. I'M HERE FOR WHAT'S *MINE.*

DO YOU HAVE MY FILES, QUINLAN?

SCREW YOU.

HOW DID YOU *FIND* ME?

"IT WASN'T THAT DIFFICULT.

"I'VE BEEN *TRACKING* YOU SINCE I GAVE YOU THAT *POWER BOOSTER.*

"I HAD A LITTLE *FRIEND* TAG ALONG.

"THE MOMENT YOU INTEGRATED IT INTO YOUR SYSTEM...

"...IT DOWNLOADED THE TRACKER.

"THE ONLY THING IT ***DIDN'T*** GIVE ME WAS THE FILES YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO ***DECRYPT!***

DING

"BUT I KNEW WHERE YOU WERE ***EVERY*** STEP OF THE WAY."

SO, I'D RATHER *NOT* DO IT THIS WAY, BUT YOU'RE LEAVING ME NO CHOICE. GIVE ME *THE FILES!*

STAY BEHIND ME.

THEY'RE CALLING YOU A "DEVIANT," DID YOU KNOW THAT? ARE YOU GOING TO *KILL* ME, DEVIANT?

WE DON'T HAVE YOUR FILES.

oh. GUESS I'LL JUST PUT MY GUN AWAY, THEN.

ON SECOND THOUGHT...

AMMON HAD *NO IDEA* WHAT ONE SHOT WOULD DO

BLAM

OR THE KIND OF *CHAIN REACTION* IT WOULD CAUSE.

QUINLAN, ARE YOU--

ARE YOU *CRAZY!?* I DON'T *HAVE* YOUR DAMNED FILES!

YOUR SHITTY *BOOSTER* F*CKED MY SYSTEM, THEN THE *LIGHTS* WENT OUT!

MY BOOSTER WAS *FLAWLESS*. IT *DIDN'T* CAUSE THE BLACKOUT.

THEN WHAT *DID?*

JUST TAKE A BREATH. I DON'T HEAR ANY SECURITY COMING, SO LET'S--

NO!

BOZE CORRUPTED MY DESIGN...I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HE'S *DONE*. DO *YOU* WANT ANSWERS, LIEUTENANT CAIRN?

DR. BOZE SCREWED US ALL OVER. HELP US TAKE HIM DOWN.

THIS IS *BULLSHIT!* HE DOESN'T WANT TO HELP US, HE JUST WANTS HIS *JOB* BACK.

WE CAN'T LET HIM *LIVE*, PETER.

WHAT'D YOU SAY?

HE'S WHY *RHYS* IS *DEAD.*

IT'S *HIM* OR *US.*

KILL HIM, PETER.

ADAPT OR DIE. ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY?

QUINLAN--- WHAT'RE YOU--

THEY'RE RIGHT, LIEUTENANT. I CREATED THE NANITES THAT TURNED YOU INTO THIS DEVIANT.

YOU WERE ALWAYS A KILLER, LIEUTENANT.

KILL HIM, PETER.

KILL ME LIEUTENANT.

DO IT.

DO IT.

SKRRIP

ADAPT OR DIE, PETER!

OKAY...

THEN I'LL ADAPT.

YOU DIE!

NOT DEAD YET!

THIS IS *INCREDIBLE.* PERHAPS IT'S A TYPE OF *DEFENSE MECHANISM.*

PETER!

CAN YOU *HEAR* ME?

PETER, PLEASE--

SHUNK

shit...

I'M SURE THE LIEUTENANT WILL BE FINE. BUT *WE'RE* LEAVING.

KRAK

YOU LITTLE PRICK!

KA-CHUNK

I *HAVE* TO BELIEVE THAT PETER DIDN'T *KNOW* WHAT HE WAS DOING.

I'VE HAD ABOUT *ENOUGH* OF--

HE DIDN'T KNOW.
DID HE?

RAT CITY #6

COVER BY DON AGUILLO

NATIONAL PUBLIC STATION PRESENTS...

THE HISTORY OF NEW YORK

The Bowery

THIS DOCUMENTARY IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM PHARMATECH SOLUTIONS.

The makers of this documentary are not responsible for inaccuracies written by A.I. researchers. ©MMXLIV

FOR EVERY PROBLEM, THERE'S A PHARMATECH SOLUTION.

PTS
PHARMATECH SOLUTIONS

FROM FARMLANDS TO AN ELEGANT PASSAGE TO **RAT CITY**, AS IT'S KNOWN TODAY, **THE BOWERY** HAS BEEN MANY THINGS THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES.

THE BOWERY IS THE **OLDEST** THOROUGHFARE IN MANHATTAN. IT WAS A TRAIL CARVED OUT BY THE LENAPE PEOPLES.

ONCE THE DUTCH ARRIVED, THEY RENAMED THE ROAD BOUWERIJ OR BOUWERIE, AN OLD DUTCH WORD FOR "FARM."

SEVERAL PROMINENT DUTCH SETTLERS LIVED ON THE BOWERY, INCLUDING **PETER STUYVESANT.** HIS NAME ONCE GRACED STREETS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THIS PART OF THE CITY.

FOR GOOD OR ILL, **HE** WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SURRENDER OF NEW AMSTERDAM TO THE BRITISH IN 1664.

AFTER STUYVESANT'S **"CANCELLATION"** IN THE 2030S FOR HIS ANTI-SEMITIC AND RACIST VIEWS, MOST OF HIS LEGACY WAS DESTROYED.

IN THE YEARS **AFTER** THE BRITISH TAKEOVER, NEW YORK WENT THROUGH SOME CHANGES...

...ESPECIALLY THE BOWERY.

THE WAR FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE **RAVAGED** NEW YORK.

BUT WASHINGTON'S CONTINENTAL ARMY **PREVAILED.**

OL' GEORGIE EVEN MADE **THE BULL'S HEAD TAVERN** HIS TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS IN 1783.

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, THE BOWERY WAS A **BOOM TOWN**. MANHATTAN'S ELITE HAD HOMES AND BUSINESSES THERE IN THE 1800s.

EVEN JOHN JACOB ASTOR, ONE OF THE RICHEST MEN ALIVE AT THE TIME, INVESTED IN THE AREA, BEING A COFOUNDER OF THE BOWERY THEATER.

BUT THEN THE **IMMIGRANTS** CAME FLOODING IN, AND THE ELITES LIKE ASTOR FLED UPTOWN FOR "BETTER AIR."

THE TENEMENTS WENT UP TO HOUSE THE NEW INFLUX OF CITIZENS, BE IT FROM EUROPE OR NEWLY FREED SLAVES FROM THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

IT WAS **TOUGH LIVING** IN THOSE ONE-ROOM FLATS.

OTHERS SLEPT ON THE ROUGH STREETS.

BUT THERE WERE **NEW MARVELS** TO BE BUILT LIKE THE ICONIC **BROOKLYN BRIDGE...**

...AND THE THIRD AVENUE EL...

...THE LATTER CAST THE BOWERY IN **LITERAL DARKNESS.**

BY THE LATE 1890S, THE BOWERY WAS KNOWN FOR THEIR BROTHELS AND SEX SHOPS.

THE COPS HAD THEIR HANDS FULL...WHEN THEY WEREN'T **TAKING BRIBES.**

YOUNG TEDDY ROOSEVELT WAS APPOINTED AS POLICE COMMISSIONER IN 1895. HE COMPARED THE BOWERY TO **DANTE'S HELL.**

SOME **CAPITALIZED** ON THE INFAMY.

MCGEE'S DANCE HALL WAS RENAMED "SUICIDE HALL" AFTER MANY ATTEMPTED TO END THEIR LIVES WITH WHISKEY AND CARBOLIC ACID.

THE 20TH CENTURY BROUGHT WITH IT **INNOVATIONS**, BUT ALSO NEW **PROBLEMS**.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION OF 1929 HIT HARD, AND THE BOWERY DIDN'T SEEM TO **BOUNCE BACK**.

VETERANS OF THE FIRST TWO WORLD WARS FOUND THEMSELVES LIVING ON HARD STREETS.

AS THE DECADES PASSED, TV SHOWS PORTRAYED PROSPEROUS HOUSEHOLDS AND IDYLLIC LIVES...

...THE BOWERY GOT ITS **OFFICIAL TITLE** OF NEW YORK'S SKID ROW.

NASSAU
HOUSE

MANY "HOTELS" LINED THE BOWERY, GIVING REFUGE TO THE "BOWERY BUMS" WHO LIVED THERE.
MASCOT
a Bynne House

LOVER
HOTEL

THEY WERE MOSTLY ALCOHOLICS JUST LOOKING FOR A PATCH OF FLOOR TO SLEEP ON.

IT WASN'T FIVE-STAR ACCOMODATIONS, BUT IT WAS BETTER THAN BEING TAKEN IN BY THE COPS.

IT'S A ***WONDERFUL*** PLACE TO LIVE WHEN YOU'RE BROKE.

MISERY LOVES COMPANY, I GUESS.

IT'S ***VERY*** CHEAP LIVING HERE ON THE BOWERY.

EVERYONE'S DOWN HERE... LAWYERS, DOCTORS... THEY'RE ALL ON THE BOWERY.

THIS IS WHERE YOU GO WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR WIFE, KIDS, YOUR MOM, AND YOUR POPS.

I DON'T CARE FOR IT HERE.

I LIKE IT ***VERY NICE***. IT'S VERY QUIET.

PEOPLE DOWN HERE LEAVE YOU ***ALONE***.

YOU CAN ***DRINK*** AWAY YOUR TROUBLES.

THIS PLACE ***STINKS!***

ALL MY ***FRIENDS*** ARE ON THE BOWERY.

IT'S THE ***BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS***.

AS WITH MANY OF THE **WORST** PLACES, THE HUMAN SPIRIT BREEDS **CREATIVITY.**

Ugh. Still smells like **piss** in here.

THE FAMOUS BCBG CLUB OPENED IN THE MID 1970s.

BCBG

315 OMGFU

IT KICKSTARTED **LOADS** OF MUSICAL CAREERS AND WAS KNOWN AS "THE CRADLE OF AMERICAN PUNK ROCK."

DESPITE THAT, THE CLUB WAS SHUTTERED IN 2006 TO BECOME A HIGH END CLOTHING BOUTIQUE.

THIS ISN'T THE **ONLY** LEGEND THE BOWERY IS KNOWN FOR.

IN THE 1990s, THERE WAS THE URBAN LEGEND OF "THE KING OF RAT CITY."

ALLEGEDLY, HE WAS SOME KIND OF **SUPERNATURAL** BEING WHO PROTECTED THE DOWN-ON-THEIR-LUCK RESIDENTS OF RAT CITY.

REC

REC

AMATEUR SLEUTHS WOULD TRY AND CAPTURE **FOOTAGE** OF THIS "KING" FIGHTING OTHERWORLDLY FOES... BUT MOST OF THEIR "EVIDENCE" WAS DEBUNKED.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE, CIRCA 1993

YEAH, ***SURE***, THE COPS HASSLE US, BUT WE'RE OKAY. WE GOT A ***SECRET WEAPON***. WE GOT A ***KING!***

NATIONAL PUBLIC STATION

BOOTSY AND BOBBY

RESIDENTS OF RAT CITY

REC

SHADDUP, BOOTS!

WHAT, BOBBY?

REC

DON' LISTEN TA HIM...HE DON' KNOW ***WHAT*** HE'S TALKIN' 'BOUT.

WHY YOU SAYIN' DAT, BOOTS? WE GOTTA KEEP ***QUIET***. WE GOTTA KEEP AL ***SAFE***.

I'M SORRY, BOBBY, BUT...AL'S A ***HERO!*** DONTCHA THINK HE SHOULD GET SOME ***GOOD PRESS*** OUTTA DIS?

Uh, EXCUSE ME, ***GENTLEMEN***... YOUR MICS ARE ***STILL ON***.

CRAP!

TODAY, RAT CITY IS THE HOME TO **MOST** OF NEW YORK CITY'S POPULATION.

TV, PAUSE.

WHAT'S ALL THAT RACKET NEXT DOOR?

AW, HELL NO!

SECURITY SERVICES, WHAT'S YOUR EMERGENCY?

A BLAST JUST CAME THROUGH MY *WALL!*

PLEASE REMAIN CALM. WHAT IS YOUR LOCATION?

I'M AT 81 BOWERY.

RAT CITY? SORRY, PAL IT'S GONNA BE A WHILE.

PLEASE... THERE'S SOME *CRAZY* SHIT GOING ON NEXT DOOR. WEIRD NOISES--

JUST HANG TIGHT. SOMEONE WILL BE THERE *EVENTUALLY.*

AAH!

F*CK THIS! I'M *OUT!*

HEY! YOU STILL THERE?

PETER! *PLEASE!* WE'VE GOTTA GET *OUT* OF HERE!

GAH!

SHIT!

WHAT DID PETER *SEE* IN THAT COCOON?

WHAT WAS HE *FEELING?*

HE ATTACKED ME LIKE I WAS HIS ENEMY...LIKE HE WANTED TO *KILL* ME.

SHUT UP!

WHAT? NO...

PLEASE...

PLEASE, PETER...

SHIT!

HE'S... HE'S STILL BREATHING.

WE HAVE TO HELP HIM!

PETER, WE HAVE TO *GO!*

HE'S HURT!

SO AM *I.*

SHIT! THE SECURITY FORCES ARE ALREADY HERE!

OKAY... LET'S GO.

WEEOOO

THERE...

...THIS SHOULD STOP THE BLEEDING.

IS THIS EVEN *SAFE?*

IT'LL HAVE TO DO FOR NOW.

YOU SAID WE HAD TO GO, SO...

SHIT!

MOVE!

HE GOT A PULSE?

YEAH. GET THE MEDTECHS IN HERE WITH A STRETCHER *STAT!*

MAKE A *HOLE*, PEOPLE!

YOU'VE LOST *A LOT* OF BLOOD. BUT DON'T WORRY...

...WE'LL GET YOU SOMEWHERE *SAFE*.

HE'S STABLE, DOCTOR.

GOOD. LEAVE HIM WITH ME.

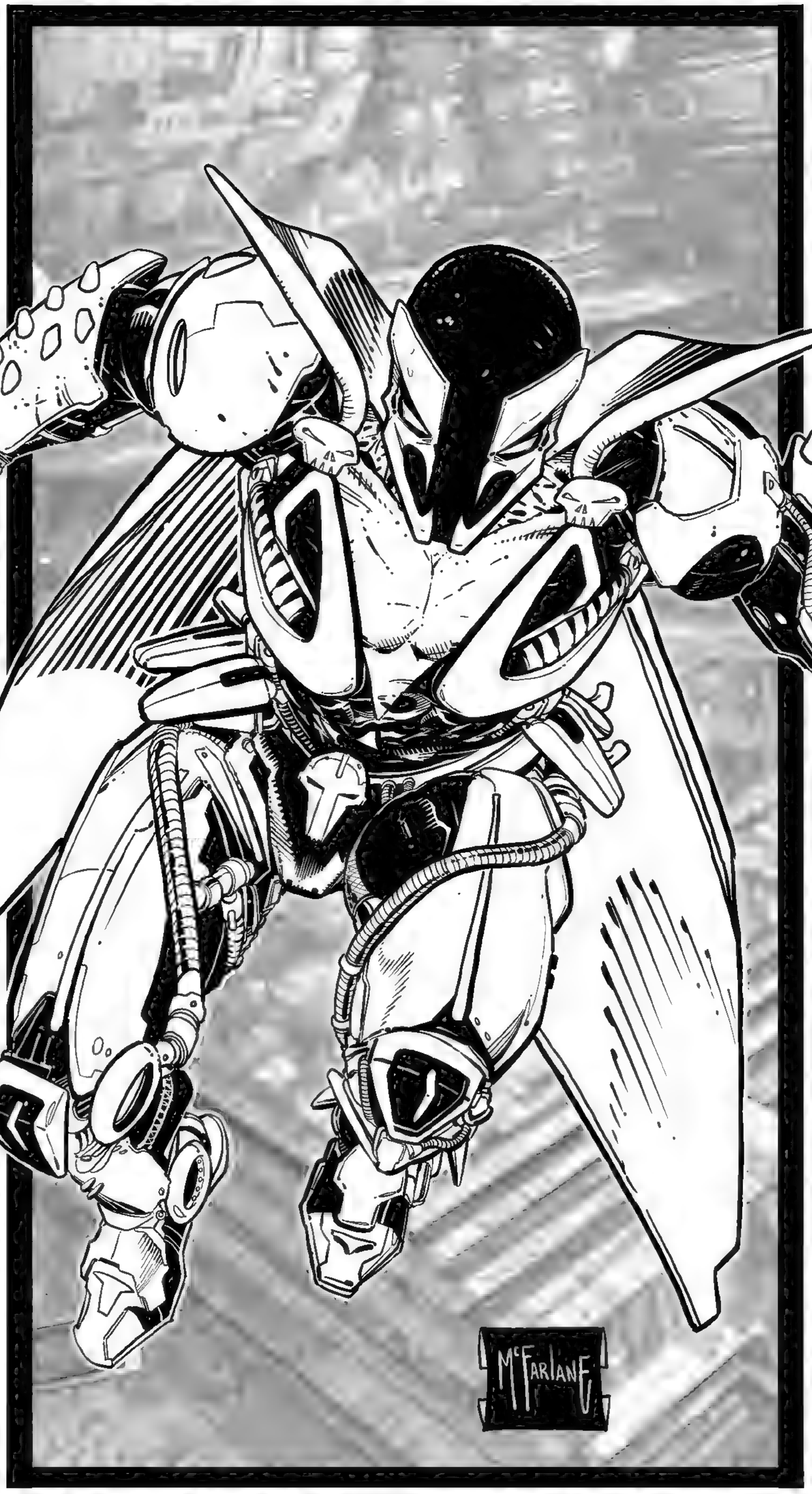
WHERE AM...

No...

HELLO, AMMON.

WE HAVE *SO MUCH* TO DISCUSS.

No!



RAT CITY #1 SDCC EDITION

COVER BY TODD McFARLANE

RAT CITY #1 SECOND PRINT

COVER BY ZÉ CARLOS

RAT CITY #1 FOURTH PRINT

COVER BY ZÉ CARLOS

RAT CITY #2 SECOND PRINT

COVER BY ZÉ CARLOS

RAT CITY #2 COVER 'B' BY KEVIN KEANE WITH IVAN NUNES

RAT CITY #3 COVER 'B' BY KEVIN KEANE WITH IVAN NUNES

RAT CITY #4 COVER 'B' BY KEVIN KEANE WITH IVAN NUNES

RAT CITY #5 COVER 'B' BY KEVIN KEANE WITH IVAN NUNES

RAT CITY #6

COVER 'B' BY THADDEUS ROBECK

RAT CITY #2

PAGE 20 INKS BY ZÉ CARLOS

RAT CITY #5

PAGE 16-17 INKS BY ZÉ CARLOS

PETER CAIRN / DEVIANT

CONCEPT ART BY ZÉ CARLOS

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"